

Looking Inside the Home for Causes of and Solutions To the Obesity Crisis

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National data suggest that 15% of American children 6 years and older are overweight, with another 15% considered to be at risk of overweight based on body mass index (BMI) guidelines. There is a prevalence of girls being overweight more than boys and the rate of obesity varies among children by race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Research has examined precursors to obesity that point to environmental influences that have potential risk factors among young children /adolescents and focus on several areas of the environment. Of these domains the home exerts the largest influence on young children and grows to include peers, community environments, and the media. Therefore as we address the obesity issue we need to look inside the home for the causes and solutions of this crisis. This presentation will address the influence families have on obesity that can start in the kitchen, the family dinner table and bedrooms.

Obesity and the Kitchen Influences

- Meal Preparation
- Meal Planning
- Availability of healthy and non-healthy foods.
- Increased range of foods
- Grazing
- Storage of Food

Obesity and the Table - Family Mealtime / Parental Feeding Practices

- Research shows that the family meal has been displaced by societal and family changes

Family and parental practices meals help prevent obesity in children

- Consistent mealtimes & snacks → food security
- Frequency and social contexts of eating
- Types of food: ↑ nutrient-dense foods, ↓ nutrient-poor foods
- Amounts of food: three serving of soda a day = five times the risk of being overweight. (Lugwig, 2001).
- Parents role model healthy eating at meals
- Prevent “disengaged” eating and promote “focused” eating, respond to hunger/satiety
- Food as a bribe, reward, clean plate syndrome
- Promote sense of belonging (Mayfield, 2004)

Obesity and the Bedroom / Private Spaces

Research links obesity and:

- Television Viewing
- Computers
- Video games
- “screen time”